

DHH Advises Caution to Residents in Flooded Areas

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Baton Rouge, La.—Louisiana is currently experiencing floods due to severe weather in many regions throughout the state. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) advises all Louisiana residents to be aware of the dangers flood waters pose and to take all appropriate precautions.

Residents are reminded that, due to the sudden nature of rain-related floods, not all flooded roadways will be marked and that local emergency resources may be under strain. Deaths have already occurred in Louisiana as individuals have either ignored posted signs regarding flood waters or entered flood waters where signs were not posted. These include an adult male in Bienville Parish, and adult male in Ouachita Parish and a 6-year-old child in Ouachita Parish.

Below are some useful guidelines and additional resources for all Louisianans regarding flooding, including information on where to get emergency updates.

What to Do if Your Community Experiences Flooding:

- **Stay Out of Flood Water**
 - Flood water may be mixed with sewage or other dangerous contaminants. Showering or otherwise washing after touching flood water is necessary. Clothes that come into contact with floodwater must be washed with hot, soapy water immediately afterward. Make sure children stay away from flood waters.
 - Do not drive through flood water. Water only a few feet deep can cause a vehicle to float or stall.
 - Flood water may also hide other dangers, such as exposed electrical wires or sharp objects.
- **Stay Tuned**
 - Keep aware of your situation through local radio or TV broadcasts. Keep an eye out for boil advisories for public water or other public health alerts. Follow the guidance of emergency authorities.
- **Know That Septic Tanks May Be Affected**
 - Avoid using a septic tank if its drain field is underwater.
- **Take Extra Care Regarding Wildlife**
 - The threat posed by wild animals and insects may be more significant during times of flooding. Venomous snakes, alligators, leeches, ants and mosquitoes are all potentially threatening creatures that you may encounter during a flood.

After the Flood:

- **Stay Aware of Flood Water Contamination**
 - Public drinking supplies may not be safe in the aftermath of a flood. Keep aware of boil advisories and other public health alerts through your local radio and TV broadcasts. At least 15 water systems are currently under a boil advisory due to the weather. If you have questions about the safety of your water, contact your water system.
 - If you have well water, you may need to disinfect your well and have it tested for contamination.
- **Recovery and Cleaning Up**

- If floodwater entered your home, you must clean and disinfect your home and any items that came into contact with floodwaters. Take precautions when doing so, especially if your home experienced a backup of sewage. Wear personal protective equipment, including rubber boots and waterproof gloves. Porous items that absorbed flood waters, including drywall, carpets, upholstered furniture and curtains may need to be disposed of entirely or professionally cleaned.
- Any food that came into contact with flood water, including canned goods, must be thrown out.

For more information from the Department of Health and Hospitals on flood water safety or other emergency efforts, visit the websites below.

- <http://www.dhh.state.la.us/index.cfm/page/308/n/176>
- www.dhh.la.gov/emergency

Additional resources are available from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness at <http://gohsep.la.gov/default.aspx>.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state residents. To learn more about DHH, visit www.dhh.la.gov. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).